1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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782 close at hand, the milk is taken to the temple, and given
788 to the pūjāri. With a portion of the milk some plantain fruits are made into a pulp, and given to an Udaya, who
264 throws them into a stream. The boy is treated with some respect by his family during the period when he milks the animal, and is given food first. This he must eat off a plate made of *Argyreia*, or plantain leaves.

361 Besides the hāgōttu within the house, the Badagas have, at certain places, separate dairy-houses near a temple dedicated to Heththeswāmi, of which the one at Bairaganni (or Bērganni) appears to be the most im-
793 portant. The dairy pūjāri is here, like the Toda palol, a celibate. In 1905, he was a young lad, whom my
123 Brāhman assistant set forth to photograph. He was, however, met at a distance from the village by a headman, who assured him that he could not take the photograph without the sanction of fifteen villages. The pūjāri is not allowed to wander freely about the village, or talk to grown-up women. He cooks his own food within the temple grounds, and wears his cloth thrown loosely over his body. Once a year, on the occasion of a festival, he is presented with new cloths and turban, which alone he may wear. He must be a strict vege-
787 tarian. A desire to marry and abandon the priesthood is believed to be conveyed in dreams, or through one inspired. Before leaving the temple service, he must train his successor in the duties, and retires with the gains acquired by the sale of the products of the herd
778 and temple offerings. The village of Bairaganni is regarded as sacred, and possesses no holagudi (menstrual hut).

782 Bishop Whitehead adds that "buffaloes are given as offerings to the temple at Bairaganni, and become the property of the pūjāri, who milks them, and uses the

796 (535) (177) front of the temple, one shouting 'How-ko, How-ko,' and the other 'Is-hōli.' The dance was taught them by the Todas, and the words are Toda."

789 796 In connection with the Jadeswāmi festival the ceremony of walking through fire [burning embers] is carried out at Mēlūr, Tangālu, Mainelē, Jakkanāre, Tenād, and Nidugala. At Mēlūr and Tangālu, the temples belong to the Hāruvas, who carry out all the details of ceremony. The temple at Tenād is owned by the Udayas, by whom the ceremonial is performed. In other places, the celebrants are Badagas. The festival is observed, on an elaborate scale, at Nidugala during (785) the month of January. All those who are going to walk over the burning embers fast for eight days, and go through the rite on the ninth day. For its performance, Monday is considered an auspicious day. The omens (787) (241) are taken by boiling two pots of milk side by side on two hearths. If the milk overflows uniformly on all sides, the crops will be abundant for all the villages. But, if it flows over on one side only, there will be plentiful crops for villages on that side only. The space over which the embers are spread is said to be about five yards long, and three yards broad. But, in some places, *e.g.*, Jakkanāre and Mēlūr, it is circular as at the (824) Muhammadan fire-walking ceremony. For making the embers, the wood of *Eugenia Jambolana* and *Phyllanthus Emblica* are used. For boiling the milk, and setting fire to the wood, a light obtained by friction must be 372 used. The process is known as niligolu, or upright stick. (789) The vertical stick is made of a twig of *Rhodomyrtus* (796) *tomentosus*, which is rotated in a socket in a long thick (824) piece of a bough of *Debregeasia velutina*, in which a row of sockets has been made. The rotation is produced by a cord passed several times round the vertical stick, of

1: Thurston & Rangachari E,G-4,5 (no date) 1909
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372 which each end is pulled alternately. The horizontal block is pressed firmly on the ground by the toes of a man, who presses a half cocoanut shell down on the top of the vertical stick, so as to force it down into the socket. A Badaga, who failed in an attempt to demonstrate the making of fire by this method, gave as an excuse that he was under worldly pollution, from which he would be free at the time of the fire-walking ceremony. Though the Badagas make fire by friction, reference is made in their folk legends, not to this mode of obtaining fire, but to chakkamukki (flint and steel), which is repeatedly referred to in connection with cremation. After the milk boiling ceremonial, the pūjāri, tying bells on his legs, approaches the fire pit, carrying milk freshly drawn from a cow, which has calved for the first time, and flowers of *Rhododendron arboreum*, *Leucas aspera*, or jasmine. After doing pūja, he throws the flowers on the embers, and they should remain unscorched for a few seconds. He then pours some of the milk over the embers, and no hissing sound shoud be produced. The omens being propitious, he walks over the glowing embers, followed by an Udaya, and the crowd of celebrants, who, before going through the ordeal, count the hairs on their feet. If any are singed, it is a sign of approaching ill fortune, or even death. In an account of the fire-walking ceremony, in 1902, it is noted that "the Badagas strongly repudiate the insinuation of preparing their feet to face the fire ordeal. It is done to propitiate Jeddayswāmi, to whom vows are invoked, in token of which they grow one twist or plait of hair, which is treasured for years, and finally cut off as an offering to Jeddayswāmi. Numbers of Chettis were catering to the crowd, offering their wares, bangles, gay-coloured handkerchiefs, as well as edibles. The Kotas supplied the music, and an

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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000 If one of the litigants was a Kota his headman would also take part in the council.

695 The proceedings would begin with statements from the contending parties. Male witnesses might then be brought to support these (566) statements. Females and serfs[8] never appeared before the councils, but if their evidence were considered important it would be heard in private by the headman in charge. Toreas could make statements and attend the meeting but used not to take an active part in the council's deliberations.

(602) A man's family and lineage would normally support him in a dispute and provided the most usual 'witnesses'. Beside their (787) testimony other kinds of admissible evidence included written receipts, re-enactments of the event, oaths testifying to a man's innocence and pronouncements uttered by a god through the mouth of an entranced man. If necessary a postponement was allowed for additional evidence to be brought. Presentation of the evidence was followed by a council discussion, after which the headman in charge voiced his opinion and determined punishment. It was not unusual to punish both parties in a dispute.[10]

Crime and Punishment

681 The following partial list of punishments suggests the sanctions traditionally placed on various crimes:

Planned murder of an adult—hanging
Unpremeditated murder—Rs. 48 fine, or servitude to the victim's family
Causing someone to commit suicide—Rs. 48 fine
Failure to obey an important order of the headman—ostracism
Failure to pay a fine—ostracism
Rape of a father's wife—ostracism or Rs. 48 fine
Rape of a son's wife—Rs. 24 fine or less
Rape of a brother's wife—minimal fine
} Reduced if the woman had consented; i.e., adultery
Man beating victim with leather—Rs. 24 fine, or head shaved
Woman beating victim with boom—Rs. 24 fine, or made to parade through village with basket of ash on her head
Minor misdemeanour—bow down inside the circle of the council (the minimal punishment)
(762) Attempted suicide—not considered an offence.

2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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797 731 attendance coinciding with the conversion and the take-over of some government schools by the Basel Mission. Crops partially destroyed through drought; blamed by Badagas on a curse from the Christian preachers, and by the missionaries on Badaga idolatry.

1859 Continuing drought. By now, ten mission schools opened.

656 797 1863 Legislation to stop private parties clearing land to farm in reserved forests. Famine and some migration of Badagas away from their native villages; this was blamed on the missionaries, who were preaching that Christ was responsible for all that happens. The continuing conversions usually attributed by Badagas to sorcery; very low school attendance. Further government order prohibiting the annual fire-walking ceremony.

787 797 1864 A Badaga 'oracle' when questioned by villagers indicated the 'English god' was dangerous and evil-intentioned. Consecration of protestant chapel at Ne:rikambe.

656 1864-1884 Land Settlement; registration of all land holdings and the real end to swidden farming.

241 1865 Some headmen pulled down their temples and built new but bigger ones, for the first time in brick. Famine on the Nilgiris; drought blamed by Badagas on their gods losing power. A promise reportedly made by the god Irabattaraya to come to the plateau to cure the sick and destroy the missionaries; many disappointed that he did not come.

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797 1873 A Badaga near Wellington became a deathbed convert to the Roman Catholic faith.

648 1875 Massacre of eighteen Kurumbas by Badagas armed with axes; this in retaliation for a fever among the Badagas.

164 1876 Monsoons failed; cholera epidemic among Badagas.

1877 Smallpox and cholera epidemics and dysentery on the Nilgiris and famine throughout South India; grain prices double the usual; heavy immigration of starving unemployed people from plains near the Nilgiris; among Badagas much loss of faith in the efficacy of Hindu rituals, and some conversions.

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797 626 1880 By now 183 Badagas converted to Lutheranism since 1858, and the process continuing slowly; ostracism and physical fighting still associated with each conversion.

656 1882 Madras Forest Act: defined forest boundaries and further restricted the cutting of timber. Family of a Kurumba

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2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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ceremony (B.E.M.S., 1850, no. 10, 23; compare B.E.M.S., 1854, no. 14, 41). Then, as later, Christ was considered *another* Hindu god, perhaps an *avata:r* of Vishnu.[11] Even the missionary could be incorporated into Hindu thinking. Metz, for example, once visited the village where a woman had just committed suicide by swallowing opium (the common method then among Badagas). As he had previously condemned her for leaving her husband and taking a lover he was now treated with great circumspection: the frightened villagers took him for either a sorcerer or a god (Metz, 1864, 71–76). Missionaries were sometimes called 'Shiva kandidhone—Swami kandidhone', the man who has seen Shiva (B.E.M.S., 1849, no. 9, 45).

The 'Christian temple' was another case of syncretism. In one village Badagas claimed that a vision of Christ had appeared to them, telling them to believe the preachers. These people promised to build a Christian temple, which they did around 1855. In it they enshrined a New Testament in the Tamil language. A legend quickly developed that every night Jesus came to taste the milk and bananas offered on his altar. But when Metz visited that village in 1863 he found the temple fallen into disrepair and the village nearly deserted. He blamed this on the current famine; the Badagas tended to blame the famine on *him*. This was the occasion already alluded to, when the Badagas interpreted the preacher's explanation of Christ's authority as meaning that Christ was responsible for the death and starvation at that time (Metz, 1864, 69–70; Reclus, 1891, 239–240).

In the same year the Badagas of that particular village went to a temple for divination and asked: 'Is he who is called Jesus Christ a good Swami [lord]?' The response was negative (Metz, 1864, 71; Reclus, 1891, 238–240). Another instance of Hindu practices being directed towards the mission was cited by Wieland. A child in Ke:ti was sick; its Hindu father promised to give five rupees to the Christian God if He would cure the child. As the child subsequently recovered the missionary was given the coins (B.E.M.S., 1907, no. 58, 68). Such action is traditional and quite routine in Hindu temples all over India.

On one occasion the Badaga boys rushed from a school in consternation when a missionary asked them to repeat a prayer after him, for they feared that 'If we say the *mantroum* of the Christians, Christ will hear, Christ will come, Christ will carry us off!' (Reclus, 1891, 239–240).

3: Hockings. E-5 (1962-1963) 1968
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356 783 (237) womenfolk have bathed, they clean the house thoroughly, sprinkle the floor with fresh, semi-liquid cowdung (in Indian thinking, a purifier), and then bring a clean supply of water into the house in clean pots. Not until these preliminaries have been completed and the house can also be considered pure is the man allowed to go to the cattle shed and bring the new salt into his house for powdering.

783 796 By the time the representatives of each family are ready to leave their houses, therefore, they have done all that they possibly can to insure that their persons, their homes, and their salt are in a ritually pure condition. From this point onward there is no further attempt to increase their purity; instead the men lavish care on making no inauspicious slip in their movements.

796 (824) (787) This is thought to be a joyful ceremony, and the acts done to promote an auspicious atmosphere are many. Strings of hill mango[9] leaves are hung over the doorways of the houses to indicate that an auspicious ceremony is in progress. As the men prepare to leave their houses with the salt, there are careful precautions to insure that the man from the Great House is the first to step outside; it would be an ill-omened lack of deference should anyone else precede him. He goes and stands on the *'hattane*, the village green, but he is careful to face away from the houses. The other men to perform the ceremony then line up behind him; were the leader to look around it would indicate that he was faltering or turning back from the performance of an auspicious ceremony.

(787) Thus when the man from the Great House feels that it is time to start off toward the stream with his followers, he cannot look behind, but he asks if all of them have come. The reply that the men give must always be "Yes"; again, it would mean an ill-omened delay for them to answer otherwise. If the leader suspects that in fact the party is not yet ready to leave, he may pose his question in an indirect fashion, as for example, "We are proceeding." If some men have still to reach the green, the reply will be a half-assent such as, "You can if you want to." A negative answer should never be given. If everyone necessary is present, on the other hand, someone merely says "Yes."

It is important that nobody, even in casual conversation, use phrases such as "it is finished" or "it is completed," from the time they leave their houses until they return to the hamlet again. This too would be most inauspicious. The logic underlying the proscription, according to one old man, is that "we should not limit, finish, or complete our society."

While en route to the stream the party must never stop; nothing must block them in the performance of such a beneficial ceremony. Should they meet any other group of people, the latter must give way; and if the other group is going to an inauspicious ceremony such as a funeral they should hide out of sight of the salt-bearing party. (This is also true of the return home afterwards.) Throughout this journey the man from the Great House must remain in front of everyone else, and when they reach (596) the stream he must dig his pit first. Deference to him is expressed again

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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after a few hours. This seemingly trivial belief had a hygienic importance, for it meant that fresh milk would be used quickly and not kept, lest the tabu about boiling be violated. If milk were allowed to "boil up" (i.e., curdle) *of its own accord*, this was taken as an omen of imminent danger or death for the household, and thus a very serious matter indeed.

The effect upon Badaga health of the changes in drinking habits outlined above was reinforced by other cultural practices, specifically in regard to buffalo dung and spitting. Various maps of Badaga villages made in the first half of the nineteenth century show that several stone kraals were located just outside each village. This means that the fecal matter of buffalo herds was confined to a certain place; (I have myself seen dung over a foot deep in some kraals). Unsavoury though these places must have been, they ensured that the dung was not spread throughout the habitation area of each village, and this substantially reduced "the chance of transference of enzootic and epizootic diseases to man" (Alland 1970: 56). As the value of farmland for tea and potato cultivation grew, especially during the present century, the Badaga population increased dramatically but the size of the cattle herds dwindled. The present-day situation is therefore that Badaga population density is vastly higher than it was, but the risks of cattle-borne infection are proportionately much less because the lack of grazing has forced them to make heavy reductions in the size of their herds and abandon many of the kraals.

As we shall see below (2.11), indiscriminate spitting was not allowed in and near the home or temple. Spittoons were used inside the house; and a proverb stressed that, "If you ask for an obligation it is essential to see the right people: it is essential to spit in the proper place." With this attitude prevalent, the spread of various viruses and of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* has been greatly curtailed. The regular washing of the body and shaving of pubic hair described below (2.9, 2.13) have also contributed to health by restricting the incidence of bodily fungi and lice-borne diseases (Alland 1970: 58). In nearly all villages the houses are built in parallel lines with solid stone or brick walls partitioning each house from its neighbours. In Ke:ti, a typical village in this respect, it was found that on the average each row of houses was separated from those in front and behind it by a distance of 10 meters, which was mostly the span of the courtyards. This relative lack of crowding of living space has

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 13]

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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path between the priest's home and the temple, or go beyond the territorial boundary of her own village. She must not collect dry firewood, lest she become barren. She must not face the village priest; so that when he starts out from his home for the temple he shouts "hu:hu:" (or rings a handbell if it is a Lingayat village) as a warning to *all* menstruating women to hide themselves. The girl must cook her own food while she is in seclusion, and cannot be supplied with it already cooked from her own home. Instead, every household in the village should give the girl a small amount of rice, chili, salt, pulse, millet flour or vegetables. Such gifts are not to be returned later in equal measurs.

3.12. A girl's first seclusion is for no fixed period. She can re-enter her home only on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday, but it must be either the first day after the new moon or else whichever of these three days falls most closely before the full moon. Although this is the Badaga custom, today one out of five girls would instead go to the nearest town and, in Tamilian fashion, consult an astrologer as to the most auspicious day for re-entering the house. On that day she bathes outside the house, puts on a set of totally new clothes, and cuts her nails with a small knife. Along with the other new clothes she is given the traditional headcloth, which she ties over her head before entering the home or which is replaced by the end of a *sa:ri* held over her head, if she has adopted that mode of dress (Hockings 1979a). Only after sunset, when she can see stars, does the girl cross the threshold, doing so with the right, auspicious foot first. It is reported that she used to be led up to the threshold by five elderly women (Francis 1908: 131). Once inside she goes to the doorway that joins the two main rooms, kneels down, and touches her head to the floor. By this gesture she acknowledges that the further room, the *ogamane*, is a sacred place which she will never pollute by her menses. As the girl bows down, older people in that house say a prayer. She then stands and bows her head to the hand of the oldest person in the house, and then to all other relatives present. Next, accompanied by another girl of similar age such as a sister, she goes round the village and bows in the same manner to all people older than herself. On that occasion each household must offer her something to eat as a symbol of their mutual kinship. Generally the girl is given milk, but in a large village she may only taste a drop of that milk because she could not drink so much. And although the village may be large, the bowing cannot be postponed

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826 827 [842] It is important that a child should look like a mixture of both parents, even though it is believed to develop solely from the man's semen when in the mother's womb. If it resembles only one of them, that parent will die within a year of the child's birth. The skin should preferably be light in complexion, and relatives will then be very proud of it. If a child is born with grey hair or light-coloured eyes, however, it is felt the family will not like it.

844 787 Badagas also believe that if a woman's first birth is a daughter, she will have further births. If the seventh birth is a daughter and the eighth a son, then the family will prosper. People also say that if while crawling the infant is seen to peer at its genitals, the next child born to the mother will be of the opposite sex.

4: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1980
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842 782 offer up the hair of all subsequent children that may have been born to him in the interim.

6.64. Early in the nineteenth century the Abbé 842 782 786 837 J. A. Dubois, understandably aghast at what he had learnt, noted that women yearning for children prostituted themselves to anyone at temple festivals in the plains near the foot of the Nilgiri Hills. "Barren women, in the hope that they will cease to be so, visit them after binding themselves by a vow to grant their favours to a fixed number of libertines" (Dubois 1906 : 596). He also wrote 842 788 about the temple at Nanjangud, near Mysore, which is in the centre of the Badagas' ancient homeland and is still much visited by them:

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> Offerings and prayers are not the only ceremonies which have to be gone through. On leaving the temple the woman, accompanied by her husband, has to go to a place where all the pilgrims are accustomed to resort to answer the calls of nature. There the husband and the wife collect with their hands a certain quantity of ordure and form it into a small pyramid, which they are careful to mark with a sign that will enable them to recognize it. Then they go to the neighbouring tank and mix in the hollow of their hands the filth which has soiled their fingers. (But I will spare my readers the rest.) After having performed their ablutions they retire. Two or three days afterwards they visit their pyramid, and, still using their hands, turn the filthy mass over and over and examine it as carefully and as seriously as the Roman augurs scrutinized the entrails of sacrificed animals, in order to see if any insects have been engendered in it. In this case it would be a very good omen, showing that the woman would soon be pregnant. But if, after careful search, not even the smallest insect is visible, the poor couple,

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sad and discouraged, return home in the full conviction that the expenses they have been put to and the pains they have taken have been of no avail. (Dubois 1906 : 594-95)

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More recently it has also been reported that sterile women attended the popular festival of the goddess Ma:riamma at Ka:ramaḍai, near the eastern foot of the Nilgiris in Coimbatore District, to have intercourse with religious mendicants there in the hope of getting children. Such unpleasant procedures, resorted to by Badaga, Tamilian and Kanarese pilgrims alike, have long since ceased to occur, but childless couples still make vows at the Ka:ramaḍai festival "Miles" : (1933 267).

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6.65. A liquid medicine (details unrecorded) otherwise given to newly delivered mothers (cf. 4.11) is administered to a person who cannot urinate. This condition and the associated swollen bladder, caused by excess of "heat" in the body, are relieved by the medicine.

URETHRITIS (*sege*)

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Fevers

6.66. The Badagas like the English have a saying, "If you are suffering from a cold, take extra food; if suffering from a fever, take little food." There are different kinds of fever, and they can affect people of all ages, but one medicine can be taken for all kinds. The shoots and smaller leaves of the velvety patchouli and related species (*koḍaṅgu*) are ground up and the juice from them mixed with some salt. This is swallowed, and is said to be more effective than quinine. In the early nineteeth century opium was used as a prophylactic against fever (Price 1908: 224).

FEVER (*jara*)

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6.67. The Kurumbas knew of a now-forgotten twig or root which, when smelled fresh, dispelled fever. The present medicine of the Badagas makes use instead of the nest of the red-headed fantail warbler

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have done an excess of good deeds over bad it is destined for heaven, whereas if there is an excess of bad deeds over good it is consigned to hell. "If you live a good life you can wait and see the human world; when you die you can wait and see the heavenly world." Badagas do not believe in the further reincarnation of souls, for each soul suffers seven births, but only the seventh incarnation is in human form, the previous ones having been as animals. God assigns a soul to each person at birth, and writes on his brow the exact number of years he or she will live. Even God can sometimes be wrong, however, because an attack by a wild animal, a suicide, murder or some other calamity, may deprive the body of life before it was destined to die. In this dilemma the soul is obliged to remain on the face of the earth for the balance of time until the day when God had intended it to depart this life. In the words of another proverb: "While living he has no blessing of God; when dead he is not in heaven." In this way ghosts are to be found on the Nilgiri Hills, hovering just above the ground with their feet pointing backwards and making a frightening sound—sometimes a screech and sometimes a groan.

Ghosts in general continue to have ordinary human needs, which they seek to satisfy. One ghost told listeners during a seance that it had lived for a while in hollow trees, but it found this very uncomfortable. Mostly ghosts want to be inside people so that they will be safe, warm and well fed. When a ghost has been exorcised from somebody, it may therefore possess another person or else live inside an animal if it is not properly trapped. Further expression of the ghost's humanity comes in the seance, when it may ask for unusual foods, liquor, cigarettes or good clothing, as a pre-condition for its leaving the possessed person. Particularly the ghosts of young people, suicides because of their anxieties and frustrations, may ask for the things they could not enjoy while alive, and will demand extra singing and dancing during the seance too.

Some Badagas are possessed by non-Badaga ghosts, in which case a ghost may speak through the victim's mouth in Toda, Malayalam, English or some other language not in fact known to the possessed person! Interpreters are sometimes brought in to help with such an exorcism.

Despite their widespread belief in ghosts, Badagas are initially skeptical of a person's claim to be possessed. They will therefore begin a seance by a questioning period to see if the ghost is "genui-

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nely" there. It is recognized that a girl may feign possession, perhaps to gain attention, perhaps to rush off wildly into the woods followed by a young man intent on taking care of her desires while there.

Ghosts are ultimately driven out either by throwing the host person bodily into a river, or by inducing the ghost into a lock of her hair, which is then cut off and either nailed to a tree or corked carefully into a bottle and buried away from the village so that it cannot escape again. The following cases offer a fair range of Badaga exorcism practices.

8.3. CASE 1. In 1962 a boy, aged 18, failed the S.S.L.C. examination and committed suicide by hanging himself. He did this because he had told all his friends he would certainly pass, and so could not face them.

Another man and his 16-year-old wife slept in a separate house from that of the man's parents. One night when they were on the way to this house the ghost of the suicide entered the girl. He was not related to her, but was in a distant "sister's husband" relationship to her husband. A month after the ghost got into her, it became active.

In May 1963, the ghost was driven out by a Badaga exorcist from another village. He is reputed to know spells strong enough to kill people, and some strong enough to remove curses laid on by other magicians. In the present case, once the ghost became active in the girl, she went into a trance and claimed to be this person or that; always a male, though. It was because the people thought she was feigning possession and would not believe her that her husband brought the exorcist. At the first seance he told her she was bluffing; and so then while in a trance she identified some of the people present, even though she was newly married to this village and might not have known everyone there. After that the people believed she had a ghost, and the ghost "started telling the truth."

Every night for a week the exorcist held a seance with her, for which he came from his village especially. A crowd of some 50 or 60 villagers, including the girl's close relatives, was always present. These people came because it is the customary thing to do, rather than because they were curious. During the seance they sang folksongs, but not hymns; and on the last day they were thanked for coming and singing. The exorcist gets little for his work: on the last evening he is usually given a loincloth and a cloak. Each seance began around 2200 hrs., and lasted for two or three hours. It was

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always in the husband's house. First the exorcist would draw a chalk pattern each evening, and the girl would sit in front of this. The villagers present would begin to sing; and then suddenly the girl would get up and start dancing. She performed no recognizable dance-step, but simply jumped around the room. On the first night the ghost revealed his true identity through her mouth. Then the exorcist asked the ghost why he was troubling the girl; and the ghost replied that he was still young, and had anxieties and needs. He then explained to them what he wanted. He had never had a chance to drink arrack (see 2.6) while he was alive; so now he wanted arrack, cigarettes and some food. Then the relatives asked the exorcist to remove the ghost. The man first said some spells, and the villagers sang. They were not able to understand his spells, although they were in Badagu, for he always muttered them under his breath. This process of chalk pattern, singing, dancing and spells went on at every seance.

The final seance also began at 2200 hrs., and after the pattern was drawn and the initial spell uttered, the girl was given arrack to drink, smoked some cigarettes and ate some food. After this the ghost bade farewell to his friends, and regretted having committed suicide. Then the exorcist took her off towards the highest hill, to a point more than a kilometer from the village though still within its boundaries. This was selected as being a distant place to which people would seldom go. A group of some 20 youths accompanied the pair all the way to the final place, singing as they went. Once they reached this point, the girl fainted and fell down. No medicine or water was given to her; but the youths watched as the man said spells over her. After that the girl got up of her own accord. When they were leaving the house, the ghost had promised that he would make some sound as a sign that he had left the girl's body: now he was heard to whistle from a point a few hundred meters away from where these people stood. Next the exorcist cut a piece of hair from the girl's head. He tied it to a nail and pushed this into the ground. Then he did some *pu:ja* to it, whereby the power of his spell was transferred to the nail. The belief is that the ghost cannot cross the iron nail.

In returning to the house the party took a different route. Once they reached there the exorcist entered the house first, and then stood on the door-step and threw cold water over the girl before she entered. This was to test whether the ghost had really left her.

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795 787 755 791 762 Apparently it had; for were this not so the girl would have started dancing again. Since that time the ghost has given no further trouble.

8. 4. CASE 2. Lakshmanan's best friend was Lingan, an age-mate who lived in the same village. In 1951 Lingan studied very hard for the S. S. L. C. examination, but was the only one in his group who failed. Very dejected, he burnt all his school transcripts and notes while on the way home; and soon after entering his house, when his mother went out, he hanged himself from a rafter. A neighbouring old lady happened to come in and found Lingan hanging there: she came out shouting, and then Lakshmanan and some others rushed in. Lakshmanan lifted Lingan up while another person cut the rope. They sent for a doctor, but by the time he arrived the boy was dead.

787 795 Lingan's neighbour was Lakshmanan's cousin, an adolescent girl whom Lingan had been fond of. Shortly after his suicide Lingan possessed her; and when Lakshmanan came home for the college vacation in 1952 he went to see the girl who was supposedly possessed. She grabbed Lakshmanan by the arm, and the spirit in her spoke through her mouth, using her voice. The ghost, in talking to Lakshmanan, did not say it was Lingan, and Lakshmanan disbelieved it anyway. Then Lakshamanan and the ghost began to talk about certain secrets that supposedly only the two of them had known about. One thing was that they used to go out of the village together to smoke; so now Lakshmanan said, "How about a smoke?" The ghost agreed and asked for some Scissors cigarettes, Lingan's favourite brand. Lakshmanan gave a cigarette to the girl, who supposedly had never smoked, and told the ghost to smoke it as he used to. The girl then went through Lingan's special routine of taking a match from the box and lighting it, using one hand only, and then once the cigarette was lit blowing numerous smoke rings.

By now Lakshmanan felt that the spirit must be Lingan, and the ghost then admitted that he was. The ghost proved his identity by saying the complete Gettysburg Address in English. This was something the two boys had studied for the S. S. L. C. ; yet the girl, who mouthed it perfectly, herself spoke little Tamil and no English at all, for she was illiterate! Lakshmanan then said, "How about the other things we learnt for the S.S.L.C.?" The ghost then continued with all of Tennyson's "Daffodils" and Sarojini Naidu's poem "Bangle Seller," in good English.

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It was decided that a Badaga priest in the village would exorcise the spirit. Usually, as in this case, the ghost is told it is going to be exorcised, and is then allowed some time to think over what things it wants. The ghost gives a list of its favourite things—food, clothes, books, etc.—and these are all brought for it from the market. In this village, after the spells have been said, the possessed person is taken to a place on the road outside the Mission Bungalow, where there is a large rock; and the ditch there used to be very deep. All the things needed by the spirit are thrown in this ditch, and nobody ever takes them away. Many are even afraid to look at the things. No matter how valuable the goods, even beggars know that they belong to a ghost. It is at this point in the exorcism that people do whatever else the spirit requests, such as dancing or singing. The spirit is then induced into a hair of the possessed. That hair is next cut off and put into a bottle that has previously been chosen by the spirit, and into which a nail is also placed. The hair is fixed tight in the neck of the bottle when the cork is jammed in, and then the part of the hair still protruding from the neck is cut off. The exorcist holds the bottle up and without shaking it, watches the nail constantly jiggling up and down. This movement of the nail is the test to check that the spirit really is in the bottle. The possessed person immediately becomes normal. Finally, the bottle and the loose piece of hair that has been cut from its neck are thrown into whatever place the spirit has previously chosen.

This was the process used in the exorcism of Lingan's ghost. Lakshmanan, the informant, witnessed it all because early in the exorcism the ghost had insisted that Lakshmanan accompany him to the end.

8.5. CASE 3. A Badaga in one village was a very powerful exorcist; but although he had learnt the art no one knew about it. One night a Tamil was busy exorcising a ghost in that village, when the ghost told him, "You are only a beginner, you can't drive me out. Only the man outside can drive me away."

The Tamilian looked out and only saw a local Badaga man; so he doubted the ghost's word, but checked with it again and then brought the Badaga inside. This man then told the Tamilian that the latter was only a raw recruit; that he should be content with the Rs 6-4 he had already earned, and should not come to the hamlet again to exorcise.

Then the Badaga got the story from the ghost. Its name had been

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Karuppu, and it was from the city of Tiruchirapalli. It had come up from the Plains on a rice lorry, and then wandered around until it got inside a girl. The ghost said it was doing no harm, and wanted to stay there; but the Badaga insisted that it should leave. The ghost asked if it could stay with the exorcist until it could be put on a lorry going to the Plains. Then the Badaga thought to ask the ghost to check how many other ghosts were in this same village. The possessed girl sat quietly for two minutes while the ghost went round the village. Each girl in the hamlet who had a ghost then jumped up and started dancing. Meanwhile the ghost reported back to the exorcist that there were five other ghosts. He replied, "Bring them here." Then the five possessed girls of their own accord all left their homes at the same time and came to that house in a state of possession. It was night-time. The Badaga drove all of the ghosts out, but kept Karuppu knotted in a handkerchief in his pocket until later he got a chance to throw the handkerchief on a lorry going down to the Plains. After that all of the possessed girls were normal again.

On another occasion a man in that village had to go home late at night, and was afraid of meeting ghosts. This same exorcist therefore gave him three stones to carry, telling him that as long as he held them the ghosts could not possess him. Later, on the way home, he was followed by a female ghost. She came right up to his house with him, although he threatened her all the way. After entering his door the man threw the three stones at her and she disappeared.

8.6. CASE 4. A middle-aged woman appeared to be possessed by a ghost: she had the signs of its being in her for nearly a year. An exorcist meanwhile came to the village as a therapist to try and cure another sick girl. As he was not successful people thought that girl had a ghost in her. They therefore held a seance at which many women were present, among them this middle-aged women. During the exorcism the patient showed no signs of a ghost, but the older woman did. The exorcist then said a spell and "stopped" the ghost in the woman. He told her that there was a ghost in her; he had caught if for the moment, but she must prepare to have it finally removed one day. From that time until the final exorcism there was no other sign of ghost or sickness in this woman. Her own husband said that she had had a ghost in her for the last five years; yet after the final exorcism he decided it was not a ghost at all but "something wrong inside."

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wrong inside."

This woman had in fact married three or four husbands in the proper manner, and divorced each in turn. She then ran away with a young man. After three months she left this man, became a Christian, served in a local Church, then was transferred to Bangalore and left the Church. She was not heard of for five or six years and then turned up one day in her natal village with a small boy. She said she had married a Tamilian in Bangalore who was now outside the village and was afraid to come in. Somebody went to bring him while the woman begged her relative not to say that she had ever been married before or had become a Christian. To this, he agreed. The three of them finally settled in a small town.

Generally a man exorcising a ghost makes a chalk pattern, and puts flowers and incense on it. In the exorcism of this woman, however, this was not done. She sat in a chair during the session, which lasted from 0745 to 0900 hrs., facing a table on which was a large picture of Murugan (Subramaniam) and some other small ones too. The exorcist sat on another chair beside her. On the table were a lime fruit, some camphor and also a plate with raw yellow rice and sacred ash on it. Ash marks were also on the four corners of her seat.

To start with the man told the ghost: "You promised the other day that when we made *pu:ja* you would go away. Now you say you aren't going." The ghost then said it would go away about 0800 hrs. At about 0815 hrs. the ghost was still arguing with the exorcist that it was not yet 0800 hrs. Then it said it would leave, but first the man must give it a picture of the Tamil god Murugan. The exorcist gave the picture to the woman. Then the ghost said it would break the glass; the man replied, "Take all the frame, too." "No, it's my will and pleasure," replied the ghost. And so the man and the ghost argued on. There were some signs that the lady was not really possessed. When her *sa:ri* fell down at the front, she put it back up on her shoulder. Had she really been possessed, she probably would not have known that it had fallen, I was told. At another point the man took a stick and threatened to hit her if the ghost would not leave her. The woman replied: "See, my brothers are here to protect me." This also suggests she was not really in a trance. At another time when the man threatened her she came over to an aunt, dragged her up, and then sat down in her place beside another relative and said to him: "See, he wants to hit me, and you aren't

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saying anything." The man remained quiet. Then the exorcist rubbed his hand around the plate of rice, and while staring at the woman said some spells. Next he told her to come back to her own seat, and she did. Then he again told the ghost it was past 0800 hrs. and the ghost had not yet left. It replied that it would go if it were given music, hymn-singing and a picture of Murugan. Then, on a relative's suggestion, the proceedings were postponed. That evening they held a *pu:ja* in one of the houses, with this same exorcist in charge. He gave a small religious picture to the ghost, and it went away—if indeed it was ever there!

Other Mental Disturbances

8.7. Cases of insanity are rarely observed in Badaga villages, not because of their infrequency but because the victims are usually killed off by their relatives with an over-dose of opium hidden in some food. In 1970 a madman hobbled with chains could however be seen in one village, but this was very unusual. Insanity is thought to be caused by a demoness, *Ka:teri pe:* who possesses a man, takes his food from him, will not leave him, and ultimately brings exhaustion by not letting him rest properly.

8.8. Witchcraft accusations are common in many parts of India (Epstein 1959), but among the Badagas this kind of paranoid behaviour does not occur *within* the community. Witchcraft is nonetheless present, but it is only the Kurumba and Irula sorcerers and occasional Todas (Rivers 1906: 262; Francis 1908: 144) whom Badagas accuse of it. This displacement of anxiety onto members of another tribe probably helps reduce it effectively. In one recent case a newly married man was apparently experiencing sexual frustrations with his wife: at any rate, he claimed that very often as he slept with his wife at night in a room off the veranda a Kurumba came, separated the two, and built a low brick wall in the bed between them. Such a thing could occur, it was believed, because the Kurumbas had the power to open a bolted door from the outside. The only known way to curtail a Kurumba's powers is to either knock out one of his teeth or cut off his hair (and probably burn it). Important in the containment of witchcraft is the fact that each cluster of Badaga villages appoints a Kurumba sorcerer to protect those Badagas from the sorcery of his fellow tribesmen. His concern for the welfare of his Badaga hosts is expressed symbolically by the key role he plays

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cious days; so the girl had to wait. She started working in a field to while away the time. After several hours the therapist called her over and said the girl need not have come as she would be menstruating in a day or two. And at about five on Friday morning she went out of the house and began her first menses. The woman who had come with her was overjoyed, and fell at the therapist's feet in gratitude. The girl bathed and was given clean clothes, then returned to her village. Such tales enhance a reputation greatly; we do not know whether any medicine was involved in getting the desired result. Asked how she could foretell such things, the therapist said that when she went to gather the herbs at dawn and prayed to God, He gave her the information needed. She also got accurate information from her dreams: thus on one occasion she dreamt that part of a wall had fallen in a heavy rainstorm during the night; another time she dreamt there were pigs in the potato field; and yet again she dreamt a particular buffalo was giving birth to a calf. On each of these occasions she woke up, told her grandson, and sent him immediately to check; and each dream was precisely true. In each she could indeed have been stimulated by some actual noise; but the effect was that relatives and neighbours believed in the infallibility of her knowledge, and she was quite famous in the Nilgiris for that.

Another specialist whose work we have described in detail (7.10) is the man who cures Big Wind. As he himself explained, there are three Badagas who know the cure, but he is the only one still able to practise. One of the other men is too old, and the third drank liquor, ate meat and generally led such an impure life that he was not successful with the treatment. The practising therapist in contrast is a vegetarian, and he works over half the Nilgiri Plateau. He never turns away a patient, because it would be sinful to do so, just as he feels it would be sinful to teach the treatment to someone who was not willing to take on every case. This therapist, who was about 80 in 1963, never charges his patients, for he believes the medicine will lose its efficacy if he puts a monetary value on it and on his own labour; but he is willing to accept gifts.

A third specialist whom we have mentioned lives in the village of Kallaṭṭi, and is famed for his treatment of the *ka:male* diseases (7.9). His family have had this speciality for the past three or four generations. He uses the dried bark of a tree that grows on the lower slopes of the Nilgiris, but there are different

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or ear-rings, then her husband will die. If anyone dreams of a male buffalo, there will soon be a death in the village, probably among the dreamer's relatives (since Ya:ma, the Hindu god of death, comes riding on a buffalo). If one dreams of a woman approaching in a red *sa:ri*, this means a contagious disease will soon affect his house, his relatives or his village, usually through the disease-bearing goddess. Sometimes a person dreams of a woman in a red *sa:ri* leaving the village where there is an epidemic: this means the infection will now end.

Causation of Disease

10.17. The Badagas neither recognize any particular god as responsible for creating or curing all diseases, nor consider any one single health factor to cause all illness. As we have already seen, only a few of the diseases that Badagas cure are known by them to have a specific cause. Nevertheless we will briefly review here the variety of causes that therapists can cite.

(*a*) There are five diseases that are visited upon people by a goddess : these we have treated in detail above (7.1-7.6). A similar kind of causation was recognized for "Big Wind," where a bad spirit or deity was believed to have flicked a corner of its invisible clothing against the patient's body. Infertility in a woman is ultimately the will of God, although its immediate cause may in some instances be the failure of the couple to love each other sufficiently. Aside from these instances, however, the Badagas do not consider other chronic illnesses or bodily deformities to be inflicted by the gods : they are rather viewed as the effect of unknown sins committed by the victims themselves in previous incarnations. The will of a god and the effect of one's own or one's ancestors' sins cannot altogether be separated, however. If a person gets smallpox, for example, it means that he has done something impure; and in curing him the therapist must pray to Ma:riamma, the smallpox goddess, to forgive the patient's sins. In this way the curing process pleases the goddess and she may therefore oblige by doing what is required of her.

(*b*) Mental illness is caused by a bad spirit or bad ghost getting into the body. It is believed, on the other hand, that a person can become strong and healthy if a good ghost enters him, for it will help his body to grow.

776 dismount. He should not urinate in a stream, either; nor should he stand up while
779 urinating on the earth, for this shows disrespect to the earth goddess. He should
782 always squat down to urinate or defecate, and for fear of disrespect the buttocks
(514) should not be directed toward the sun at this time. But apart from such minor regulations for personal conduct the gods of nature receive little attention, except when the water-goddess has not brought rain in time. Then the villagers will say prayers and make offerings at one of their temples in an attempt to get the favor of a rainfall.

The fourth category of supernatural beings is the ghost. This is the wan-
775 dering spirit of a person who chanced to die before he was destined to, and it
779 frequently gets inside a living person to find warmth and food. The malicious
(789) ghosts can cause a lot of trouble, but there is no use in worshipping them. When a ghost becomes bothersome it is exorcised by a man noted for this art, who gives it whatever material requirements it may (through the mouth of the possessed person) demand. Ghosts cannot usually act as intermediaries between men and gods; but there is a special category who become angels. These are dead people who have done good during their lives, but who for some reason want to return to this
(828) world rather than be merged with god. While they are waiting to be reborn to a
(787) higher social status they act as the messengers of god, and come to people in their dreams to warn them of impending disasters.

The fifth category of supernatural beings is the demon, who is periodically
776 propitiated with a blood sacrifice or some liquor. This is a being who is incapable
779 of doing good, but may do harm if he chooses. He is thought capable of killing
782 people that he meets at night, and of obstructing various projects. There are no temples to the demon, but there are recognized places in the fields where offerings are left for him, just as there are recognized places for leaving things that

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585 lives, and is kept in a separate house. A good day is fixed for the marriage. Pandals are erected, grand preparations go on and the marriage takes place in the regular way that we shall describe presently. Among all the other Baḍagas what may be called court-
584 ship prevails. Child marriages never take place among Baḍagas,
[184] though, as we have seen, a child is often bespoken for marriage from the very day of its birth.

In the other Baḍaga castes the parents have nothing to do in the preliminary arrangements of a marriage settlement. The young Baḍaga leaving home always takes a friend with him when going
584 out in search of a wife. He has to observe certain omens on his
787 way to the girl's house. The sight of flesh or an empty pot or a single jackal is always considered a bad omen. Filled pots or a pair of jackals coming from an opposite direction is considered a good omen, indicating a happy union. Thus the way and the nature of the omens are the first points to be observed, and to see that the anxious young man in search of a wife does not ignore these facts, a friend, but really a spy, tracks him to the house of the girl whom
584 he intends to ask to marry him. The parents or the other elder relatives of the girl understand from the presents which the youth brings, and from the friend by whom he is accompanied, that he has come in search of a wife, and they leave the young pair to meet and be happy in each other's company. The young man spends four or five days there, and if the girl is to his liking he temporarily takes leave of his future wife's relations and returns home in haste to complete the marriage arrangements. If the pair do not like each other, that they shall never marry each other is settled then and there, and that is the end of it.

When they like each other, the young man, as we have seen, returns to his parents, and sends them, or some other elder relatives if his parents are not alive, to settle the marriage. These proceed to the girl's house and falling at the feet of the parents of the girl request them to give her in marriage to their son. Generally the mother of the boy asks her future daughter-in-law whether she will marry her son and tells her that she has plenty to eat or as she would put it—*Timbadu niṅgênu koravillâ*. The girl respectfully replies that she will do as her parents order, and, though she has almost always been carefully tutored up, her answer appears to be given in an extremely natural and simple manner.

585 A day is then fixed, and the marriage is always performed in the bridegroom's house. Five, nine or thirteen women relatives

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764 [237] [372] over the four twigs. The oldest relation now descends into the pit and performs his last act of worship to the dead body by lighting (or rather throwing into the fire) perfumes. This ceremony is called *Mîlapâla*—the passing of the thread (of the manes over the dead man.) Several petty things are then placed in the grave. First of all a *Liṅga*, which is supposed to give to the dead eternal felicity in the other world. Then come a small gold coin called *Virarâyapaṇa* of the old Maisûr mint, a milking vessel a bambu measure, rice and other condiments, a stick with a silver knob, an umbrella and a new basket are also placed in the grave. These are supposed to be of service to the departed individual in the other world. Whatever may be omitted, the *Liṅga* and the *Virarâyapaṇa*, the bambu measure and the milking vessel (*Hoṇe*) must always be placed in the grave. Even the poorest Badaga must not grudge these to his dead relation.

After all these arrangements are completed and the dead body is thus provided with what it needs for its journey to the other world all stand round the grave and the eldest son, or the nearest agnatic kinsman if there is not a son, takes three handfuls of earth and pronounces the following *mantra* or incantation :—

Jatige śêru jnnage śêru
Hetta hettappane śêru
Mutta muttappnê śêru :

'Mix on with your class, mix on with your people, mix on with your forefathers and mix on with the forefathers of your forefathers' All pronounce this and throw down three handfuls of earth each. The meaning is plain ; the soul of the departed is requested to join the souls of the forefathers of the family who have already departed from this life. Then the grave is covered up. In thus covering up the grave the earth must not be passed between the two legs of the person who throws it in. Then five small stones are placed over the closed grave, one at each of the four corners and one in the middle. The spade which was used in digging the grave is stuck to its handle in a reversed position and is dragged from south to north and cast away. All the men then proceed to the river, bathe, and return to their homes by dark. When they return home a lamp is lighted and is worshipped by every one of these persons. It may here be mentioned incidentally that the worship of lighted lamps is a characteristic feature of the Badaga religion. In every house the lighted lamp is worshipped, and it is a belief among them that if a light dies out of itself in a house every kind of prosperity will

778 787 [354]

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778 quit the family. Thus a Badaga will never sleep with a light in
787 his house, but before he goes to bed worships it and then carefully
(513) extinguishes it. A grand feast is given that night by the agnatic kindred or by a son of the dead person to which all come to eat.
764 Both in the river and in the house the *Linga* is worshipped by the Badagas if they are of the Lingayat class.

The feast closes the first day's funeral rite of the Badagas. The second day's ceremony is a simple affair. It is what is called the pouring of the milk over the grave. On the morning of the second day the eldest mourner of the family starts to the burial place with five measures of the *Koraṭi* grain tied up in his cloth and a big new pot containing milk.

Worship is performed to the stone placed in the middle of the grave and the milk from the new pot is poured over it. The son pours it first and then the others follow him in turn. Each of those assembled there then takes up a handful of the *Koraṭi* grain and pronouncing the words *Avvappane ṣeru*—'Mix yourself with your forefathers'—they cast it over the middle stone all at once. All then march round from south to north and touch the five
(302) stones. They then proceed to the river, where, after having been shaved—even their moustaches are removed as an indication of their deep mourning,—they all bathe. They then worship the *Linga* there and return home where the same act of worship is again performed, and this brings to a conclusion the ceremonies of the second day.

The third day is a very important day and the funeral rites of the dead may be said to close with it. At 1 A.M. on that day four plantain leaves, four measures of rice, four measures of bean-seed and four new pots are made ready in the dead man's house. All
(415) gather there round a *Kerachi*—a bronze pan used for frying grain, &c. Paddy is poured into this *Kerachi* by the agnatic kindred and by a son of the dead person, while five females, the wife not joining, stir it up with reaping hooks. The *Kerachi* is already placed upon a lighted fire; and while the paddy is thus being turned up the wife mourns outside with loud wailings. A handful of straw from the outside thatch of the house is brought in and lighted up in the hall —*edirmane*. The four new pots, four plantain leaves, &c., are
(782) passed over it. Five or three youngsters hold the pots, while the
(539) elders utter the following prayer:—

Hâl hechchali hap hechchali
Kuḍi hechchali payil hechchali,